

IV.

*Case of a singular and alarming concurrence of Scorbatic Hæmorrhagies, terminating favourably. By Thomas Fowler, M. D. Member of the Royal Medical and Physical Societies of Edinburgh, and of the Medical Society of London. Communicated in a Letter to a Friend.*

ON perusing the thirteenth volume of the Edinburgh Medical Commentaries, I observed an account of a remarkable case of scurvy, which brought to my recollection a case, which occurred many years ago in my own practice, when I lived in the city of York; and as it was attended with certain circumstances, not altogether unworthy of attention, I have taken the liberty of extracting it from my Medical Reports, with a view to its appearance in the same valuable repository of Medical knowledge.

30th April 1771. Miss P—— of York, aged twenty-eight, on rising this morning, discovered on her arms, breast, lips, &c. a number of livid spots, about the breadth of common pease, which appeared like so many black patches. Her gums were very spongy, and exhibited also livid spots, from several of which the blood began to ooze.

She is of a scorbutic and melancholy constitution, has led a very sedentary life, having been constantly engaged in the business of a mantua-maker for these eight years past; during which, she has had an habitual dyspnœa, and frequently complained of her gums being sore to the touch, and disposed to bleed from the slightest pressure. Appetite good. Stools and menses regular. Pulse small and weak, and naturally rather quick.

About five weeks ago, she was seized with a slow fever; from which, however, with medicinal assistance, she recovered in less than three weeks, and has made no complaints since, till this morning.

Ordered to take a powder of six grains of alum, and six of dragon's blood, with ten drops of the acid elixir of vitriol, in three table-spoonfuls

spoonfuls of a common decoction of Peruvian bark every three hours ; and to wash her mouth frequently with a gargle, well acidulated with vitriolic acid ; also to enter upon a cordial regimen, with the liberal use of red wine, lemonade, and acescents.

*May 1st.* The number of livid spots, and bleeding from the gums are increased. She has also passed bloody urine ; had two bloody stools, and her breath is become very foetid. Ordered to continue the medicines and regimen.

*May 3d.* The livid spots still increase, both in size and number ; and therefore, she has taken the medicines, since yesterday, every two, instead of every three hours. The bleeding from the gums, although not violent, has never ceased, day nor night, and is only somewhat abated whilst using the gargle. She has had no stool for these two days, and is sickish in the morning. Ordered to continue her medicines and regimen ; to take a dose of lenitive electuary immediately, and to repeat it as occasion may require.

*May 6th.* The spots have not increased for these three days ; and their livid aspect be-

gins to lessen. The urine is at times rather less bloody; but the oozing of blood from her gums having never intermitted, has much disturbed her natural rest. She is also become faint and weak from loss of blood. Her medicines have been continued every two or three hours, and her regimen rendered more cordial. The lenitive electuary having had no effect, a common milk glyster was given last night, and procured a stool, which was less bloody. Her appetite is but moderate.

Ordered to omit the styptic powders, on account of costiveness; and to continue the decoction and elixir every three hours; also the more cordial regimen, with the gargle.

*May 9th.* The bleeding from the gums stopped yesterday. The faetor of the breath seems to be going off; and the spots begin to appear brown. The urine is approaching to a natural colour; but having continued costive, she has taken, occasionally, some decoction of ramarinds with senna; and, the day before yesterday, had two stools free from blood.—Ordered the medicines and regimen to be continued.

*May*

*May 11th.* She mends apace. Stools and urine quite natural. Spots going off. Appetite improved. Ordered to take the decoction and elixir only three times a day.

*May 17th.* She continues mending. Some spots are quite gone off; and the rest are pale, and vanishing. Appetite good. She gains strength, and walks out every day for the benefit of the air. Ordered to continue her medicines only twice a day.

*May 20th.* She has no symptoms of her complaint remaining; and is now as well as in her best state of health, being never wholly free from her habitual dyspnoea.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

In this patient's case, the following causes seem to have concurred in producing the disease. Her scorbutic melancholy habit of body, sedentary mode of life, asthmatic state of lungs, and, in particular, the previous slow fever, from which she might be considered only as a convalescent.

That the hæmorrhagies were of the scorbutic kind, appeared obvious, from the absence of fever, from the fætor of the breath, sponginess of the gums, numerous livid spots, spontaneous occurrence of the several discharges of blood, and the obstinate continuance of those which took place from the kidneys and gums, being seven or eight days without intermission.

The treatment which has been adopted, lays no claim to merit, superior to the late improvements in modern practice; and therefore, the history of the case is given as an instance of a favourable termination of an alarming concurrence of scorbutic hæmorrhagies; and as a proof, how far the human frame may be successfully supported, by a diligent application of proper means, under a continuance of those discharges, provided they be *neither sudden nor violent* in their accessions or exacerbations.